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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9459
INFO RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 6193
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI 3040
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1604
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1782
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0700
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
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DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/IP/ITA, DS/IP/SPC/SO, AF/E
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/21/2028
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [ASEC](#) [PINR](#) [ER](#)
SUBJECT: REPORTED GSE REACTIONS TO UNMEE CRISIS

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for Reason 1.4 (d)

11. (S/NF) RSO met with Source February 20 who relayed second-hand information from the MFA's Americas desk officer. Source has provided reliable informaton to RSO in the past.

12. (S/NF) The MFA desk officer told Source many GSE ministers and high-ranking civil servants are upset with President Isaias' current course of action in forcing UNMEE out of Eritrea. There is growing dissent within the government over the current policies, but everyone is afraid to say anything or confront Isaias about his actions. The desk officer and his colleagues feel that if UNMEE forces depart Eritrea, the prospects for war with Ethiopia will increase. He told Source UNMEE's current deployment of international troops on the Eritrean side of the border acts as a buffer to prevent war. If UNMEE pulls out, or redeploys to Ethiopia, he fears nothing will prevent Ethiopia from attacking Eritrea. He also stated that many Eritreans think Isaias is deliberating increasing tensions, to attract international attention to Eritrea's plight, with the Presidents believes is being ignored.

13. (S/NF) The desk officer further stated that his superiors briefed MFA employees that the Eritrean government has evidence Ethiopia will attack, but did not provide any specific information. A reliable DAO source reported that Isaias continues to drink heavily and his health might be questionable. During the recent Eritrean military holiday Fenkil, Isaias was observed drinking two entire bottles of "Zibib," an Eritrean hard alcohol beverage and appeared drunk.
MCMULLEN